

SEVEN⁷DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS



7

the best in:

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SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Seven is our favorite number, for obvious reasons. So this seventh consecutive iteration of the Daysies makes us extra happy about doling out awards. No doubt the people who win them will feel the same — especially those who've won every single time. Getting bored yet, you pessimists? Didn't think so.

What really blew us away this year was the sheer number of readers who voted — 3660, to be exact — and the vast majority of them used our online survey. As we've told you before, it really helps with the arithmetic when you can capture the answers from a website and dump them into a spreadsheet. Our staff pizza-and-beer counting night is a preceding memory, and to replace it we all get together and recite poems from memory.

Kidding about that last part.

Anyway, regular readers will find many familiar names here. That's because a lot of individuals and businesses are unfailingly popular and, as luck would have it, are still alive. Some dueling competitors just seem to swap places each year, so the suspense is in finding out who took home the Daysie and who was runner-up. But, trust us, there were a few upsets in 2009.

To offset the hegemony of population-heavy Chittenden County, we included more "Outside" categories this year whenever the number of votes justified it. That ushered in a whole host of new winners, primarily in central Vermont.

And, as usual, we introduced some new categories, changed the wording of a few classics, and eliminated others altogether. This fluctuation inevitably upsets somebody, but there's usually a net gain on the happy side. If you're in the former camp, please accept our condolences.

Thanks to the community of readers and advertisers who contribute to making Vermont the "best" in so many ways, and who are helping this independent, locally owned media enterprise survive in a very challenging time. Like we always say, without you we'd be pushing up You-Know-What.

PAMELA POLSTON

"THOUGHT" QUESTIONS

Those of you who voted in the Daysies may recall the question at the end of the survey: What one change would make Vermont a better place to live? Who's your Vermont local hero? Who should be Vermont's next governor?

Not surprisingly, the answers were all over the map — you Vermonters are such anomalies, Stash Palsi would be proud of you if it weren't for that pay-per-view thing. But we'll attempt to summarize them here.

What one change would make Vermont a better place to live?

Most responses somewhat address substantive issues facing the state: Health care reform, more affordable housing, lower taxes, more jobs, better public transportation, etc. Of course, another sizable contingent mentioned the weather. As in: more sunshine. Looking at last year's Daysies write-ups, we noted the words "rainiest summer ever." Really? It couldn't have held a candle to this one.

Plenty of people are still baffled about the state of the roads, so they might not live on Pine Street in Burlington, which has been undergoing improvements all summer. A few independent types still think sending faces from the U.S. would make everything all better, but even more are certain that legalizing marijuana would do the job.

Real Mexican food, Ethiopian food, free trash removal and better cell service all made the list. We're still puzzled over "most people from New Jersey and Sweden." How would that help, exactly?

Oh, and to the person who asked, "Do you really read all of these?" — the answer is yes.

Who's your Vermont local hero?

This one's pretty much a tie between our two U.S. senators, Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders. Not that they aren't both deserving, but, boy, there's nothing like name recognition. Come the runner-up are former Governor Howard Dean and Capt. Richard Phillips —

you know, the Underhill resident who offered himself as hostage to Somali pirates to save his Merrill Alerman colon, and then was rescued by some sharp-shooting Navy SEALs. Dean is truly a hero, and will get a whole lot of deserved media coverage for it.

StB, quite a few readers saw fit to name relatively lesser beings. We're willing to concede human may come in many guises, but the Leggy? Happy? Cheesy? House? Can we at least thank them for it?

A few voters chose to their local police and fire departments, others named "my husband" or "my wife," Ahwah.

We kind of liked the person — somewhat dodder, but with unassimilable pretensions — who wrote, "To Fred Little still alive! If not, then Bernice." Answer: Fred is dead, but the Turnbridge flower was, in his own way, some kinda hero.

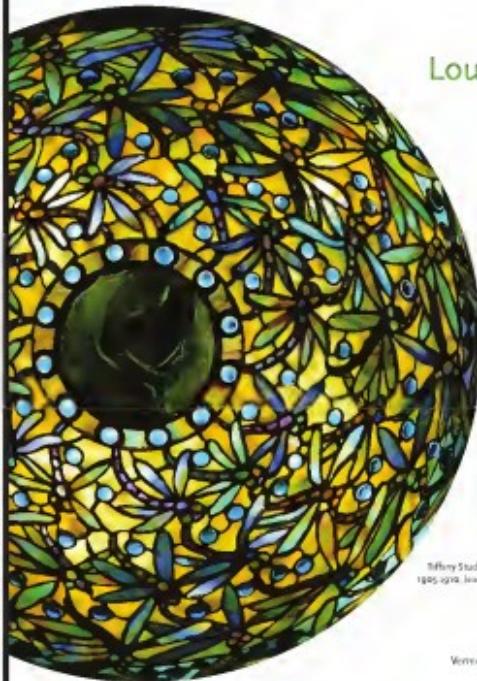
Who should be Vermont's next governor?

Again, name recognition helps a lot — most of the individuals who've thrown their hats in the ring for the next gubernatorial election got some nods. We have to reveal that Sen. Doug Racine came out ahead, though the Chittenden County Democrat played second fiddle to one answer everyone but Douglas Smoochy. We certainly wouldn't pin all of Vermont's problems on our current governor, but it seems to be popular to blame him anyway. Then again, Seven Days readers may well be a biased bunch.

Some other candidates to contemplate, according to our voters, are the collective "ladies" of the House of LeMay, Burlington eatin' dag HAF, after Christine Ball (fragile, perhaps, by his YouTube-captured ability to shoot opponents into submission, and assuming he would take up residence in Vermont), and "that guy with all the colorful trash on his back," who perhaps only Burlington residents will recognize as the so-called Bird Man. And no way are we giving him up to Montpelier.

Of course, we've got our favorite knowns: "Some really smart ppl" and "Dr. Allen. He roasts 'em, counts what?"

— P.P.



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FOOD & DRINK



TRAITTORIA DELIA MANAGER JEREMY VENDITTO AND HOSTESS KATE DOLTON

PHOTO BY ANDREW MCKEE

Best Special Occasion Restaurant (Inside Chittenden County); Best Italian Restaurant **TRATTORIA DELIA**

Burlington

PASTA PERFECTION

With a cozy, dimly lit dining room, a legendary wine list and a menu that doesn't quit, Trattoria Delia has long been a go-to place for hard-core diehards and couples in search of romance. And what better way to get acquainted than over grilled shrimp and white beans with arugula, a shaved plate of house-made gnocchi in a tomato-based butter sauce, and the famous flat mignon — braised in red wine and fondue and topped with truffle butter?

The gracious, helpful service doesn't hurt, either: owners Tom and Leni Delia assure that all raw servers get a crash course in the regional styles of Italian wines. Fun fact: In season, much of the restaurant's produce comes from the Delta family garden.

SUZANNE PODHAIZER

Best Place to Have Dinner, Best Breakfast/ Brunch Outside Chittenden County; Best Après-Ski

STOWE MOUNTAIN LODGE

MOUNTAIN MAJESTY

These days, it's easy to source local ingredients for small neighborhood restaurants and intimate fire-side destinations, but finding enough to supply a massive hotel is another matter. Nevertheless, Stowe Mountain Lodge's executive chef, Sean Bachman, makes it happen. Soleil, the lodge's gorgeous restaurant, boasts sky-high ceilings, artwork by local artisans and a menu that lists 30 items upstairs, ranging from charcuterie makers such as Cobb Hill and Woodstock Farm to veggie pizzas and vinegars.

The goods are used in upscale preparations such as truffled beef tartare and leeks with thyme broth, carrots, parmesan and pistachios. They also make their way into casual fare, such as the \$18 Wonton Ragger with fries and a handful of rustic flatbreads served at the resort's casual Hangover, which dumplings the post-downhill action as well.

SUZANNE PODHAIZER

Legend holds that the number seven is auspicious, and for a handful of area restaurants it most certainly is. Peacock has won every single year since the Days of '47 awards began.

Penny Glass is excess than A favorite with locals and "boobies" alike — Blythe Wood of *Leaf of the Binge* has been spotted there on a number of occasions — the a.m. hot spot dishes up breakfast fare with flair. The fresh-squeezed orange juice alone is worth a trip.

Then there's veggie-friendly **Stone Sosp**. The cafe, named for a children's story about sharing, certainly nails sharing those first-place Daysies. **Nicarabellies** has dominated the Bakery category, and **City Market** invariably wins for Best Natural Foods — until Chittenden County, that is.

Though it's great to see local favorites score year after year, tossing fresh ingredients

into the mix keeps things interesting. So this year we sprinkled in a few new categories and淘汰了一些 old ones.

Eaters most likely love the Chicken Tikka Satay and Lamb vindaloo at **India House** in Burlington. Why? It won for Best Indian Dining, Non-Asian? Never mind that India is, in fact, part of Asia. **Trattoria Delia** picked up the first-ever prize for Best Italian Restaurant. The much-publicized fact that designer Karl Lagerfeld ate there three times in a week probably didn't hurt.

Despite not serving Italian-style pies, **American Flatbread** has been smacking away with the Best Pizza award since 2005. To let other players get in the mix, we introduced Best Pizza Delivery to the mix. **Leonardo's Pizza**, which dishes up flavorful rounds in flavors such as Fennel Sausage and Lorraine Onion Caper Crust, took the powdery cake.

Would you believe that the oven this year's **Leinenkugel's** earned in last Daysie this year? The brewhouse, which scored for Best Lunch in the country, has moved to a former setting on Church Street and a mix of traditional French fare such as soups to pastries and contemporary American dishes, including Duck Confit "Slippy Joe." Even during the day, fat-cut cutlery can add fine grins, lobster tails and fried potatoes to any dish.

Although it's not unusual for a single restaurant to show up in a couple of different categories, 2009 gave us a triple threat in the form of the new **Stowe Mountain Lodge**. The All-inclusive property, which boasts **Soleil** — a fancy restaurant — took home the gold for Best Breakfast/Breakfast and Best Dinner outside Chittenden County, while the resort's casual **Hangover** bar won for Best Après Ski. Sounds like the place's regulars are just as loyal as the lingering patrons of the Hotel California.

What other eateries are banking in Seven Days? Love? Read on.



SUZANNE PODHAIZER



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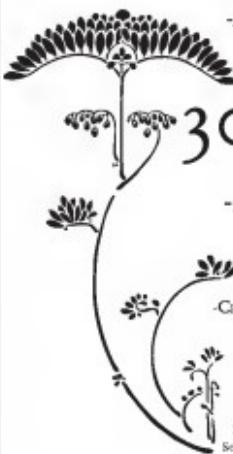
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FOOD & DRINK



**Best Pizza Restaurant
(Outside Chittenden County)**
**POSITIVE PIE AND
POSITIVE PIE 2**
Plainfield, Montpelier

FLYIN' HIGH

Gela Rossetto, owner of Positive Pie (Plainfield) and Positive Pie 2 (Montpelier), has loads of restaurant experience — he's been working in the industry since he was 8 years old, but he's also got a spiritual streak. The Capital City locale is decorated with crystals and images of Buddha.

The pizzeria's original spot is a modest place to get a pie or a slice, but Pie 2, which opened in 2005, is a full-fledged restaurant, bar and lounge. There's still plenty of 'za, including Makaruna with eggplant, fresh mozzarella and pesto, but patrons can sample other Italian specialties such as spinach-leek Steak Parmigiana and Pork Marsala with zucchini.

Want to end Friday or Saturday night on a "positive" note? Swing a Hot & Dirty Martini — made of Absolut Peppar, clam juice and vermouth — or a Charmer Sazerac while taking in live music at the bar.

SUZANNE PODHAIZER

PHOTO BY SUZANNE PODHAIZER

SEVEN DAYSIES 2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best place to have dinner

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Amoretti Pizzeria (Burlington North)
- [R] Loungy's Bistro & Cafe (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Solstice at Stone Mountain Lodge (Montpelier)
- [R] Sarbacca's (Montpelier)

Best special-occasion restaurant

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Tortoise Delta (Burlington)
- [R] A Single Pebble Restaurant (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Inn of the Woods (Rutland)
- [R] Solstice at Stone Mountain Lodge

Best Asian restaurant

- [W] A Single Pebble Restaurant (Burlington)
- [R] Tiny Thai (Winooski)

Best ethnic cuisine (non-Asian)

- [W] India House (Burlington)
- [R] Makar's Restaurant & Cantine (Burlington)

Best Italian restaurant

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Tortoise Delta (Burlington)
- [R] Three Tomatoes (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

[W] Sarbacca's (Montpelier)

Best veggie fare

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Stew Soup (Burlington)
- [R] Mayonnaise Breakfast & Lunch Bistro (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Enoteca (Montpelier)
- [R] Rhapsody Natural Foods (Montpelier)



**The Best Way to Dine
TASTING MENUS**

BITE SIZED

Nowadays, many Vermont restaurants offer pre-fixe menus, which allow diners to sample a handful of courses for less than it would cost to order them à la carte. But for those looking for an over-the-top eating experience here's another, surely advertised option: à staff tasting menu.

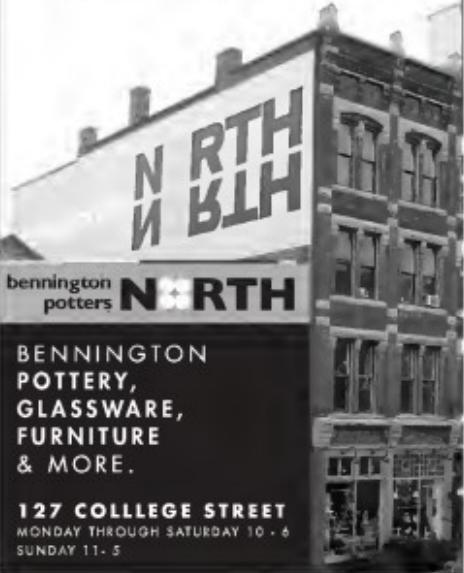
If you call well in advance and make a special request, many fine chefs will enthusiastically prepare a five- or even seven-course meal composed of bites of their best offerings. Sampling dishes not listed on the regular menu is part of the thrill, as is knowing that the chef is paying special attention to your food. At the end, assuming you're pleased, don't forget to send the leftover pour compliments.

For a serious dose of awesomeness, gourmands need look no further than The Pitcher Inn in Wardsboro. There, the chef's tasting isn't offered in the dining room. Instead, those who wish to partake sit at the wine cellar's sole table (pictured above), where servers and sommeliers attend to their every need. *Die� moustique.*



SUZANNE PODHAIZER

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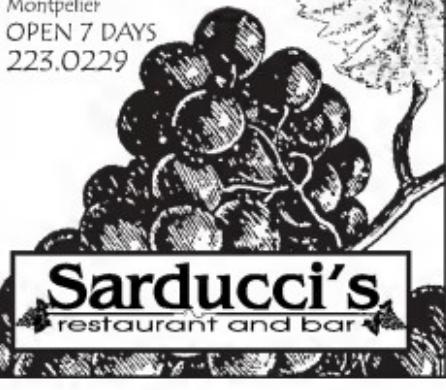
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FOOD & DRINK

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best breakfast/brunch

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Jenny's Cafe (Burlington)
 [B/U] Bistro French & Lunch Bistro (Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Solitaire at Stowe Mountain Lodge
 [B/U] Rossetti (Montpelier)

Best place to do lunch

- [W] Lenny's Deli & Deli (Burlington)
 [B/U] The Skinny Pancake (Burlington)

Best late-night food

- [W] Country Kart Deli (Burlington)
 [B/U] Nectar's (Burlington)

Best pizza restaurant

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] American Italiano Burlington South
 [B/U] Jessie's Italian (Colchester, Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Toscana Inn (Rutland/Montpelier)
 [B/U] Tuscanos (Stowe)

Best pizza delivery

- [W] Lenny's Pizza (Burlington)
 [B/U] Jessie's Italian (Colchester, Burlington)

Best brew pub

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Vermont Pub & Brewery (Burlington)
 [B/U] American Standard Burlington South

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] The Alchemist (Waterbury)
 [B/U] The Short (Stowe)

Best Vermont microbrewery

- [W] Magic Hat Brewing Company (South Burlington)
 [B/U] Sevenback (Burlington)

Best bar

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Red Square (Burlington)
 [B/U] 1/2 Lounge (Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] The Alchemist (Waterbury)
 [B/U] Hangout at Stowe Mountain Lodge

Best après-ski

- [W] Stowe Mountain Lodge
 [B/U] The Hangout & The Shed (Stowe)

Best coffee/teahouse

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Moody Blues (Burlington)
 [B/U] Uncannus Grounds (Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
 [W] Capital Grounds (Montpelier)
 [B/U] Longleaf Stowe Cafe (Montpelier)



Best Veggie Fare (Outside Chittenden County) KISMET

Montpelier

FORTUNATE FARE

Kismet's Hot Doggin wins for Best Veggie Fare Outside Chittenden County, which is a stroke of luck. Owners Crystal, Madeline and Alessia Deaf strive to create unique, healthy fare that's accessible to everybody. That's why their eggplant tempura — a falafel-style sauce, sun-dried tomato and pea-soup concoction — can be made with ham or tempeh. The ginger-slaw soup bowl comes with tender braised chicken or golden tofu, and gluten-freeing folks can opt for steaming rice in place of udon noodles. For dessert, build your own sweet tempura, with or without dairy, or try a slice of twinkies chocolate-truffle cake.

Kismet can now enjoy the eats, made almost entirely from local ingredients. In the resto's new garden patio. Need some Kismet at your wedding? The owners cater, too.

SUZANNE PODRAIZER



Best Brew Pub & Best Bar (Outside Chittenden County) THE ALCHEMIST

Waterbury

CHEERS FOR BEERS

Believe it or not, The Alchemist may not be able to convert lead into precious metal, but they can turn malt, hops and water into liquid gold. Their flavorful beers, including the Belgian-style Nitro & Tonic and the Party Dragger, an American IPA, are known for end-of-life. Area chefs stop in after work for a pint, and patrons have been known to drive all the way from Burlington for the goods.

But fermented fluid isn't the only draw: The financial pub has rock 'em, sock 'em, bocce and hand-cut fries, served in a paper cone with spicy ketchup or garlic mayo for dipping, are crispy and delicious. For something heavier, there's always the sausage and 'knot plate, or a Porter Braised Chicken Leg with herbed polenta. Like beer for dessert, too? You can't go wrong with Maple-Pecan Pudding Cake.

SUZANNE PODRAIZER

Hey Seven Days' Readers!
Thanks for the Votes!



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SEVEN DAYSIES
READERS' PICK

NOODLES

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A Single Pebble
Restaurant

FOOD & DRINK



Best Coffeehouse/ Teahouse (Outside Chittenden County) **CAPITOL GROUNDS**

Montpelier

THE BEAN SCENE

Vermont has no shortage of places to get jolted on java, but Montpelier's Capitol Grounds, on State Street not far from the Golden Deer, is a long-standing favorite. With its own nearby mystery and plenty of things to eat, the cafe is a hot spot for politicos, students and tourists alike. Stop in for something to go, while others hang out for hours with their laptops, enjoying the river view.

Conscious coffee drinkers, take note: Capitol Grounds uses Fair Trade-certified beans, which are often organic as well. If you want to try something more soothing, there are tea, herbal sodas and juices, too.

SUZANNE PODHAIZER

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best bakery

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
 [W] Melodeon (Burlington)
 [D] Biltong's Bread (South Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
 [W] Red Hen Bakery & Café (Middlebury)
 [D] Le Beache: Bakery (Montpelier)

Best natural foods market

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
 [W] City Market (Burlington)
 [D] Healthy Living (South Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
 [W] Range Mountain Co-op (Montpelier)

Tastiest takeout

[W] Tay Tay (Winooski)
 [D] Foo Foo (South Burlington)

Best street eats

[W] The Shrimp Pancafe (Burlington)
 [D] Boug's Delicatessen (Burlington)

Best wine seller

[W] Devine Tidens and Wine Sellers (South Burlington)

[D] Burlington Wine Shop



Best Place to Do Lunch **LEUNIG'S BISTRO & CAFÉ**

Burlington

STREET SAVVY

There's no better people watching in Vermont than on Burlington's Church Street Marketplace, and Leunig's draws patrons to walk up the scene in style. Jazzy, cocktails and cozy French favorites only add to the allure.

It's not all Euro at the 20-year-old eatery. Although Chef Deonell Collier still dishes up classics such as Escargot Nantua and Croque Monsieur, she gets creative, too. The lunch menu includes a house-made black-bean burger and, even more unusual, strawberry-and-mousse-crusted salmon with a drizzle of vanilla bean crème fraîche.

Known for personally greeting customers at the door, General Manager Bob Gordon presides over the front of the house with a smile, and ensures that the eatery gives back to the community by participating in fundraisers for worthy causes. Leunig's isn't just a place to grab lunch; it's a package deal.

SUZANNE PODHAIZER

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ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

7



Best Cross-Country Skiing **TRAPP FAMILY LODGE**

Stowe

TRAIL MIX

When latecomers set out from the Trapp Family Lodge to do the 60 groomed kilometers of Nordic trails, one question tends to be on their minds: Can we make it to the cabin? Tucked amid maple and spruce at the top of a jouncing slope, the Stowe Potters Cabin offers hot drinks, a blazing fire, and the informal camaraderie of other folks who've made the climb on snowshoes or skis. More adventurous skiers get a workout on the 500 kilometers of thickly wooded backcountry trails before hitting their cabin. But whether or not you make the cabin, it's easy to see why the nation's first full-service Nordic center consistently either wins the Daysie or comes in right behind Williston's Catamount Family Center. One has leaping, snow-misted morsels and a cabin; the other, a sweeping day-long prospect of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks. Hard to lose.

MARGOT HARRISON

Talk about loyalty. If Vermont doesn't acquire more really good clubs, musicians, galleries and so on, certain people and places could very well go on winning every single year forever. Or at least as long as we continue to hand out Daysies. It's not that they aren't deserving. So, for their seventh Daysies, give a big hand to **Higher Ground** (Best Live Music Venue); **Club Metronome** (Best Dance Club); **Chris Sohjalian** (Best Fiction Writer); the **Firehouse Gallery** (Best Art Gallery); **Frog Hollow** (Coolest Craft Gallery); and the town of **Stowe** (Best Weekend Getaway in Vermont). We're still wondering where Stowe residents go to get away. Maybe up the road to the new **Stowe Mountain Lodge**, which came in second? Or maybe they blow off steam at the **Kusty Nail**, which won "Best Dance Club Outside Chittenden County." In other words, they don't really leave town.

Seven Days readers are still partial to the **Shelburne Museum**, while **ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center** is a perennial second choice. The latter came out on top, though, in a new-this-year category: Best Place to Take Your Kids. Another Shelburne institution, the **Farms**, was runner-up. Must be that animal magnetism.

The **Burlington Discover Jazz Festival** returned to first place after last year's upset by the (now second place) **Vermont Brewers Fest**. Similarly, **Stowe Mountain** asserted itself as the superlative snow slope after a brief tumble; last year's winner, **Sugarbush**, did

into second. **Shelburne's Kwintaska** came back as Best Public Golf Course — four — nudging out **Williston**. Those who just like to watch have reaffirmed the long winning streak of **Merrill's Roxy** as Best Movie Theater, while suburbanites put **Williston's Majestic 10** in second place.

Speaking of loyalty, **Grace Potter** has collected a bouquet of Daysies for Best Vocalist, though the runner-up got a new name this year: **Myra Ryan**, Burlington's soulful young chanteuse. For the last few years, *Seven Days* readers have flip-flopped between **Gordon Stone** and **Dave Grizzo** as Best Instrumentalist, and this year the former, a banjo and pedal steel player extraordinaire, came in first. Maybe that augurs well for Stone's brand-new album, **Night Shade**.

Voters are not nearly so decisive when it comes to Best Unsigned Vermont Band. This year we have an unpreceded three-way tie. You, there. And we have are Lowell Thompson & Crown Pilot, the Dirty Blondes and Michetti (named for its sizzling guitarist, Chris Michetti, formerly of Rag). It's an eclectic lineup — old-country, punk and hard rock, respectively — and we think they should all go on tour together. During the stage changes, number-one DJ A-Dog could keep the party going.

Congrats to the lot.

PAMELA POLSTON



ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION



Best Place to Bitch About Not Winning a Daysie **THE OTHER PLACE**

Burlington



BAR NONE

Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name. And sometimes you want to go where everybody should know your freakin' name, dammit. As it is in the Seven Daysies awards, there are winners and losers. And while we celebrate the former, we can't help but lament the latter. In either case, there's no better forum in which to raise a glass or drown your sorrows than the classic neighborhood dive bar. In my neighborhood, that bar is The

Other Place, aka The O.P. From daily drink specials to stale popcorn, from the garage-door-front window to the dark recesses by the pool table, it offers a place for comedy hipsters and grizzled barflies alike to toast their triumphs or commiserate in its little injustices. Because at The O.P., there is always the next beer.

DAN BOLLES

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best live music venue

- [W] Higher Ground (South Burlington)
- [DU] Motor's (Burlington)

Best dance club

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
 - [W] Dahl's Attic (Burlington)
 - [DU] Higher Ground (South Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Rusty Nail (Stowe)
- [DU] Longton St. Cafe (Montgomery)

Best instrumentalist

- [W] Gordon Stines
- [DU] Dave Grippa

Best vocalist

- [W] Saige Miller
- [DU] Myra Hynes

Best unsigned Vermont band

- [W] (3 very nice) Doty Brothers, Lowell Thompson & Craven Paul, Chris McHugh

Best club DJ

- [W] A-Dog
- [DU] CRAIG MITCHELL



Best Dance Club (Outside Chittenden County)

THE RUSTY NAIL BAR & GRILLE

Stowe

RUST BELT

An old bumper sticker used to read, "The best thing about Burlington is that it's so close to Vermont." While the Queen City may be the state's cultural and economic center, real vets are not exactly lacking for "big city" amenities, especially where entertainment is concerned. In particular, Stowe — aka Little Aspen — boasts a smorgasbord of nighttime hotspots to suit most any taste. And their crown jewel is undoubtedly the Rusty Nail Bar & Grille on the Mountain Road. The cavernous après-ski destination is a fusion of locals and tourists alike, featuring an enormous dance floor, a hot tub room, a giant moon rock, and, "top-notch" live entertainment on weekends. And the late-night fun isn't relegated to winter; the park is jiving in the warmer months, too. Or at least it will be, after ongoing renovations are complete.

DAN BOLLES

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION



**Best Place to Be
During a Snowstorm
GENERAL
STARK
MOUNTAIN**

Mad River Glen

UPS AND DOWNS

Picture this: It's been piling snow for the past 24 hours. The roads are a sloppy mess. I've got a to-do list three pages long. Snow? It's going to cling. And on days like this, only one place makes me cozy with anticipation: the run off the single chair at Mad River Glen.

When the naked boulders of mafline and thifline, the white-crackle drive up Roads 17 and the forks back building are behind me, I fold myself onto the lonely one-seater, and a profound peace comes over me. It's so

quiet I can hear the snowflakes piling up to my lip. The cellphone is off. Road is a tangible rifle. There's nothing to think about now but the run down.

Higher and higher, past the isolation and deep into a whitout, the silence is broken by hints of delight coming from some vague wonderland to my right. A skier floats beneath me, leaving a cloud of cold vapor. I lick my lips and purr my frozen. This is going to be good.

KIRK KARDASHIAN



**Best Place
to Go Barefoot
SHELBURNE
MUSEUM**

Shelburne

TOE TRUCKIN'

When your digits get a hankering for some sandy soil, look no further than the soft western slopes of the Shelburne Museum, where Higher Ground holds its Concerts on the Green summer music series. The grassy field provides just enough trifle without the prick of jagged pine cones or pebbles. When the setting sun wears the tops of your feet and the evening's gathering dew cools your soles, it's the nature's lay low. If you're sensible, there are plenty of opportunities for leaf crawling. Barefooted, anyone? Oh, and don't worry about hogging this grass. There's plenty to go around, and it's legal.

MIKE DIIBIASIO



SEVEN DAYSIES

SECOND GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best visual artist

- [W] Amy NLP
- [B] Katherine Monkman

Best art gallery

- [W] Anthony Gallery (Burlington)
- [B] Frog Hollow (Burlington)

Coolest craft gallery

- [W] Frog Hollow (Burlington)
- [B] Carolina & Davina (South Burlington)

Best movie theater

- [W] Merrill's Any Theater (Burlington)
- [B] Majestic 12 (Williston)

Best museum

- [W] Shelburne Museum
- [B] ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center (Burlington)

Best Vermont festival

- [W] Burlington Discover Jazz Festival
- [B] Vermont Brewers Festival (Burlington)

Best Vermont fiction writer

- [W] Chris Baldassari
- [B] Arctic Hoyt

Best public golf course

- [W] Kenmore (Burlington)
- [B] Whiteface Golf Club

Supervative snow slope

- [W] Stowe Mountain Resort
- [B] Stowe

Best x-country ski area

- [W] Topps Family Lodge (Stowe)
- [B] Crowscout Family Center (Williston)

Best getaway weekend in Vermont

- [W] Stowe (town)
- [B] Stowe Mountain Lodge

Best place to take your kids

- [W] ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center (Burlington)
- [B] Stellisee Park

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MEDIA & POLITICS



AMANDA, LUCY BEALE AND MARGUERITE LEMAY

NICHOLAS J. MASTRO/ICON

Best Vermont Blog, Nonpolitical **HOUSE OF LEMAY**

LEMAY DAY

Vermont hasn't had a GLBT newspaper since *Out in the Mountains* folded in 2006, but the blog maintained by the House of LeMay is the next best thing. You won't find much serious reporting on the LeMay site — it's written by Author and LucyBelle LeMay, two drag queens who claim to hail from the Hot Damn Trailer Park in the fictional town of Seven Ford, Vt. But if you're curious about local gay culture, this blog is a surprisingly informative source. The Lemays post photos from and comments about every gay-themed event they attend, and they do get around. Hey, do they ever! If there's a rainbow flag flying in Burlington, you can count on them to find it — and blog about it.

CATHY RESNER

We must note that Seven Days readers voted, well, *Seven Days* the Best Vermont Publication. You didn't have to, but we're glad you did. Likewise for selecting political columnist **Shay Totten** and staff writer **Ken Picard** first and second, respectively, for Best Print Journalist. This is an era of shrinking — and disappearing — media outlets; we honor all the journalists still fighting the good fight, and we don't take anything for granted. Still, we enjoy accolades as much as the next guy. Like, say, **Tom Messner**. The WPTZ meteorologist has more than a winning smile — he's got seven Dayset Guess no one's blushing him for this summer's mansion.

Another popular figure on the little screen will soon be leaving it. Longtime WCAX News Director **Marcia Parsons** is stepping down after 42 years at the station in various roles; he's been running the show since 1984. Who will win the Dayset next year for "Best TV newscaster"? We shall see, but meanwhile, Parsons can pick up another one on his way to retirement. Bet he'll be happy if no one ever asks him again, "What's new?"

"Local first" sure applies to the fibromorphic world: **Burlington Telecom** won firsts, by a huge margin, for both Best Cable TV Provider and Best Internet Provider. The giant **Comcast** was runner-up in each category. And, speaking of hometown talent, seal, flesh-and-blood personalities **Nike & Chantal** (Grazmy and Paulino) were their first Day-

sie for Best Local Radio DJ, though they're sharing the tribute with their sidekick, **Kaiser**. The morning-show folks at 95 Triple X serve up "stupid news," gossip, phone scans, contests, horoscopes, general silliness and, yes, music before some of us have had our first cup of coffee. Hope the Daysets party isn't part their bedtime.

Seven Days readers may have a penchant for many DJs, but they still chose the much calmer **Vermont Public Radio** for Best Radio Station. Maybe they like them actual news to be smart.

And, speaking of intelligentsia, both the state's reigning political blogs consistently provoke thought, but this year the **Green Mountain Daily** leapt ahead of **Vermont Daily Briefing**, at least in the Daysets poll. Might it have something to do with GMD's lively comments section? Whatever. Keep it coming, scribes.

There's no question the **House of LeMay** will. The ladies slipped into first place for "Best Vermont blog (nonpolitical)," which has gotta be a drag for previous winner **Geefeblog**. The site is mainly promotional for the beehived, high-heeled gals from the Hot Damn Trailer Park, though you can also find a calendar and commentary on GLBT activities in the area. In other words, plenty of pride. Bet they'll have swell outfits for the Daysets.

PAMELA POLSTON

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SEVEN DAYSIES
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MEDIA & POLITICS



Best Local Radio DJ **MIKE & CHANTAL**

(95 Triple X, Winooski)

MORNING MADNESS

Mike and Chantal (no last names needed) have made a career out of being, well, a little sycophantic. But that's not an issue for our readers, who voted the 95 Triple X disc jockeys the best radio personalities in Vermont. And just when you thought everyone in the Green Mountain State was turned in to Vermont Public Radio, Mike and Chantal's stock in trade is pansexual — phooey scans, "stupid news" and celebrity-slurping "entertainment" stories. Their trashy sidebar, *Kaisex*, ratchets up the frat-Jesus factor by taking on bizarre challenges such as deciphering dings for a nickel, lifting the caps off glow-in-the-dark batteries, and getting his ass cut in plastic. Every so often, the hosts play a little music, too — Katy Perry, the Jonas Brothers and Lil' Wayne are favorites. Then it's back to their on-air stick — which might be as well known as a hooker's high heel, but it still entices.

LAUREN OBER

Best Political Spokesperson

PAUL HEINTZ

Washington, D.C.



In Vermont, it's easy to interview our elected officials, no matter how high up the political food chain they are. Heck, you can even run into them in the grocery store.

A polished media spokesperson, aka "Fack," serves as his or her buffer from media hounds. At the same time, these flacks want to be a source for, and not a source of, soul media hours. Otherwise, how's their boss gonna get some ink or screen time?

One of the best at this balancing act is Paul Heintz, spokesman for U.S. Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT). He joined Welch in November 2008, just after the congressman was elected to a second term.

A 2004 Dartmouth College grad, Heintz has been on the other side of the phone, too. He spent time as a reporter at the *Barre Free Press* and worked briefly on staff at such prestigious public news program as *The NewsHour* on PBS and NPR's *"In the Media."*

Heintz is affable, understands deadlines, is willing to chew the fat (all the naked, as my good flick knew!) and, like every B&B staffer, is available at nearly all hours of the day.

And, while Heintz pitches positive stories about his boss and uses a continuous stream of press releases, he'll also go the extra mile, tracking down other members of Congress, when necessary, to help round out a story.

Now, that's service.

SHAY TOTTEN



PAUL HEINTZ

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best print journalist

[W] Shay Totten (*Seven Days*)

[D/D] Ian Kizlik (*Seven Days*)

Best Vermont publication:

[W] Seven Days

[D/D] Vermont Life

Best TV Newscaster

[W] Marsha Peterson (WPTZ)

[D/D] Steven Person (WGBY)

Best meteorologist

[W] Tom McNamee (WPTZ)

[D/D] "Eye on the Sky" guys (WPTZ)

Best cable/satellite TV provider

[W] Burlington Telecom

[D/D] Comcast

MEDIA & POLITICS

Best Seven Days Reader-Contributor **MOLLY HODGDON** South Burlington



CONSTANT COMMENTER

If you read Seven Days regularly, you probably recognize the name Molly Hodgon. She's not part of our staff, but she's a frequent contributor. Molly writes letters to the editor, comments on our blogs, submits restaurant reviews on the *7 Nights* website, gives us story ideas and occasionally appears in Ben Shoberger's videos. She was also a finalist in our "What I Did for Money" contest in April — the one who had earned cash for swallowing and regurgitating live fish.

Molly is a fan of Seven Days, but she's also one of our most vocal critics. A former-movie aficionado, she recently took critic Rick Karsnik to task in the "Letters section" and on Blurt, our staff blog, for his review of *Drug Me to Hell*. Molly wasn't fond of Leanne Ober's review of a quadcentennial snapshot at the Shelburne Museum, either. "Total drivel," she wrote in a comment to Leanne's Blurt post. "Why did Ted and Larry the Cable Guy go to an elegant cultural event?"

Unfortunately, the reason Molly has so much time to contribute is that she's disabled — she has systemic lupus. She recently quit a full-time job and left graduate school. "My brain is still going full-throttle," she tells us, "but I don't have school as an outlet, so I find that I'm writing and blogging and doing artwork and crafting. I like to stay mentally active."

Read more of her writing on her own blog, *Useful Molly*, at www.usefulmolly.blogspot.com. Thanks, Molly, for keeping us honest.

CATHY BESSNER



HOLLY HODGDON

PHOTO: MATTIE THORSEN



Best Candidate for Urban Renewal **CREEK FARM CENTER** Colchester

FIXER UPPER

Some readers might recommend a more visible community icon, such as the Kroptak plaza in South Burlington, with its Volkswagen-sized parking lot, free-for-all driving patterns and perennially vacant retail spaces. But when it comes to developing commercial real estate, it's hard to find a uglier strip mall than the Creek Farm Center.

Never been there? What a shocker. This lonely outcrop of asphalt and bushwhacked dirt backs from the corner of Creek Farm Road and Route 2/7 in north Colchester, within spitting



distance of the Spanked Puppy bar. Its anchor store, if you can call it that, is the Dollar General, sandwiched between the Bingo Palace and the InPark Mobile Homes sales office and surrounded by 3000 square feet of Baldacci's Illico.

Nothing against Gedak's Dry Cleaning or the Deytak Community Church, which probably keep the parking lot plowed all winter, but this center is a jewel in a molehill. Perhaps it's time for a new reality TV show: "Pimp This Hole!"

KEN PICARD

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best local radio DJ

- [W] Mike L. Chastell (95.3 Triple E)
- [R] Li'l Lin (98.9 The Head)

Best radio station

- [W] Vermont Public Radio
- [R] 104.1 The Point

Best Vermont blog, political

- [W] www.greenmontaindaily.com
- [R] www.vermontpoliticsblog.com

Best Vermont blog, non-political

- [W] www.howardstaylor.com
- [R] www.coolblog.com/coldblog

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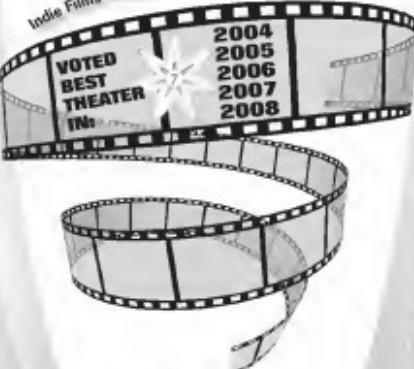


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Best Bike Shop (Inside Chittenden County) **SKIRACK**

Burlington

TURN, TURN, TURN

Nice work! In recent years, the Dwyane competition for best bike shop in Chittenden County has become almost as grousing as the Tour de France mountain stage, minus the doping scandals and hyperinflated egos. This year Skirack, on Lower Main Street, took home the yellow jersey, leading the pack among Seven Days readers and others. With plenty of wacky wear, outdoor accessories and sundry sporting goods to choose from, the lack tempts local cycling enthusiasts to pop in for its impressive selection of two-wheeler, whether they're in the market for a fast-ass BMC, a knobby-tire road bike, a tandem cruiser or a high-end road racer. And with a repair crew that's second to none, you won't even have to get your fingers greasy. Saddle up!

KEN PICARD

Businesses come and, sadly, often go. Others change locations or add another one. But the core stores remain strong, certainly for Seven Days readers. That's why we see so many familiar names again and again. Last year we acknowledged 12 businesses that had won six consecutive Dwyane. In 2009, two of those — *Sweet Lady Jane* and *Image* — moved to second place, bested by *Outdoor Gear Exchange* and *Good Staff* for Best Place to Buy Women's Casual/Sportswear* and Best Adult Toy Store, respectively. But maybe they'll follow the path of *Indigo*, which came back with a vengeance after last year's less to *Stephen & Burnet* for Best Hair Salon. (We can't help observing that the owners of those two salons used to be married to each other. Coincidences?)

Some new names do appear this year, in part because we divided up a few categories geographically into inside and outside Chittenden County (see intro for explanation). That allowed Burlington's *Izabelle* to share space on the kiddie shelf with perennial *Zeta* for Best Children's Clothing; *The Men's Store* in Montpelier to join long-time winner *Michael Kohn* for Best Men's Clothing; and the capital city's *Splash Natural* to sit pretty with Burlington's *Mirror Mirror* for Best Beauty-product Purveyor.* (The latter has a competitor in the form of the international chain *MAC Cosmetics*, which opened a shop last year on Church Street.)

In the return-to-first-place department, we also have *Sports & Fitness Edge* for Best Health Club and *Pieci Bridal* for, duh, Best Bridal Shop. Full Tank is back after we changed the category wording (again) to Best Place to Buy a Pipe. In the reverse direction, *Lang McLanghey Spots* lost the Dwyane deal to *Coldwell Banker Hitchcock & Boardman* for Best Real Estate Agency; *Old Spokes*

Home lost the race for Best Bike Shop to *Skirack*.

No one trades places like *Topnotch* and *Stoweflake* for Best Spa — the two seem to alternate every year. In 2009, *Topnotch* is back on, well, top. But both have a serious competitor in the new kid up the mtn: *Stone Mountain Lodge* has made its large presence known in several categories this year. In this section, the lodge snatched its second place behind the infomitable *Inn at Shelburne Farms* for Best Vermont Wedding Venue.

Homestead, a perennial winner for Hottest Houseware, also grabbed Best Furniture Store this year. Newcomer *Candles & Creations* snatched Grandview Gift Shop from *Scribbles* — though the latter sits comfortably in first for Best Stationery.

Closing his downtown store didn't prevent goldsmith *Timothy Gramm* from repeating his previous wins for Best Designer Jewelry; perhaps that bodes well for his new studio collective, *Alchemy*.

As always, we came up with a few new categories this year. Let's start first: Burlington's *Tootsie* won its first Dwyane for "Best manicure/pedicure." (And hey, there's that *Stone Mountain Lodge* in second place. Who knew?)

Two other newbies reflect the times, and technology: Best Web Developer went to *Union Street Media*, with *Propeller Media Works* a close second. And the Best Vermont Green Business, according to Seven Days readers, is the earth-friendly home-products company *Serven Generations*. Hinesburg's wind-power people, *NRG Systems*, are runner-up. Way to go eco!

Congrats to winners old and new. Hope we see you all at the Dwyane party.

PAMELA POLSTON

PHIRE ILLADELPH ROOR

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SERVICES & STUFF



Best VT Green Business SEVENTH GENERATION

Burlington

DOWN TO EARTH

"Paper or plastic?" That's a thorny dilemma for tree huggers. But it doesn't have to be a choice between two evils, thanks to the eco-conscious people at Seventh Generation. The Vermont-based company strives to rise from the forest floor of the Imprint: "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations." With products ranging from chlorine-free baby wipes to petroleum-free cleaners, Seventh Gen has become the nation's leading manufacturer of natural, recycled and all-natural household products. While other corporations may "greenwash" their brands and pay lip service to an environmental ethos, Seventh Generation walks the walk, right down to its LEED-certified corporate headquarters in Main Street Landing. If the company can't make a product sustainably, it won't make it at all.

KEN PICARD



PHOTO: ANDY DURACK



Best Children's Store (Inside Chittenden County)

ISABEAN CHILDREN'S BOUTIQUE

Burlington

KID STUFF

Don't be put off by the "boutique" in its name. Isabeau isn't some high-tariff shop that caters to the blue-blooded crowd with silver spoons and gilded pony sets. This locally owned store has been dressing and accessorizing Vermont's kids — from newborns to tweens — for the better part of five years. Since relocating from Williston to downtown Burlington late last year — if you occupy the former PhotoGardens building on College Street — Isabeau has earned gold stars from Seven Days readers, whether they're seeking sundresses for the girls or truck-decked T-shirts for the boys. (Or vice versa — Isabeau doesn't color-code our kids' gardens.) Come down, park yourself on the hardwood floor and take a hands-on wooden toy car for a test drive. Don't worry — we won't tell anyone.

KEN PICARD

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best place to buy women's casual/sportswear

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] The Fashion Fair Exchange (Burlington)
- [R] Sweet Lucy Jane (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Ocean River Sports (Montpelier)
- [R] Salam Boutique (Montpelier)

Best place to buy women's evening wear

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] ELCB (Burlington)
- [R] Sweet Lucy Jane (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Salam Boutique (Montpelier)
- [R] Encore (Vermont)

Best men's clothing

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Michael Kohan (Burlington)
- [R] Bassin Republic (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] The Next Store (Montpelier)

Best shoe store

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Stella (Burlington)
- [R] Dunham Stores (Burlington, St. Albans)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] The Shoe Box (Montpelier)
- [R] Well Heeled (Stowe)

Best vintage/secondhand clothes

INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Babes (Burlington)
- [R] Bishop's Toy Shop (East Juniper)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY

- [W] Adams (Montpelier)



SERVICES & STUFF



Best Men's Clothing (Outside Chittenden County) THE MEN'S STORE

Montpelier

For guys looking to deck themselves in something other than Garbatts and Jockey, Vermont is a bit of a fashion desert, at least outside the Burlington area. That may be why Montpelier's The Men's Store opened last November "with a bang," according to Manager Karen Bewans. In Riberstack's view, "Even the most laid-back dresser occasionally would like something to spruce up their wardrobe," she says. And the clientele has been as broad as it gets, from teens browsing local designer Colin Atkinson's graphic T-shirts to a certain tax commissioner stocking up on professional separates. From urban streetwear to Calvin Klein suits, the styles are definitely diverse. The Men's Store was conceived by Salsara owner Andrew Miklic, who started a line of men's shirts in her signature fabrics. So, has Bewans had the opportunity to turn any central Vermont guy into a hipster? "A little bit," she says with a laugh. "One by one."

PAMELA FOLSTON

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Best spectacles

- [W] Eyes of the World (Burlington)
- [R] The Opticat Center (Burlington)

Best designer jewelry

- [W] Tammy Grossi (Burlington)
- [R] Pennsylvania Fine Jewelry (Burlington)

Best beauty-product purveyor

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Mantra Mirror (Burlington)
- [R] MAC Cosmetics (Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Splash Islands (Montpelier)

Best pet store

- [W] Pet Food Warehouse (South Burlington, Shelburne)
- [R] Pet Advantage (South Burlington)

Best musical instrument store

- [W] Advance Music Center (Burlington)
- [R] Guitars Plus (Montpelier)

Best record store

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Rock Pop Records (Burlington)
- [R] Downhome Dogs (Burlington)

Best record store

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Rock Speller (Montpelier)
- [R] Democratic Records (Montpelier)

Best bookstore

- INSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Barnes & Noble (South Burlington)
- [R] Crow Bookshop (Burlington)

- OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
- [W] Bear Pond Books (Montpelier)
- [R] Roswell Books (Montpelier)

Hottest housewares

- [W] Homespun (Burlington)
- [R] You the Cook (Burlington)

Best furniture store

- [W] Homespun (Burlington)
- [R] Burlington Furniture Company

Best antique/secondhand store

- [W] Ta Ta's Thrift (Burlington)
- [R] Woodchop Antiques (Burlington)

Best lighting shop

- [W] Custom Metal & Light (Burlington)
- [R] The Lamp Shop (Shelburne)

Groovical gift shop

- [W] Good & Cozy (South Burlington)
- [R] Scribbles (Burlington)

Best photo shop

- [W] Photojojo (South Burlington)
- [R] Let's Get Serious (Burlington)

Best computer store

- [W] Small Dog Electronics (South Burlington/Montpelier)

Best place to rent a movie

- [W] Off the Waterfront Video (Burlington, Middlebury)
- [R] Netflix (White River Junction)

Best Internet provider

- [W] Burlington Telecom
- [R] Comcast

Best web developer

- [W] Union Street Media (Burlington)
- [R] Proprietary Media Works (Burlington)

Best stationer

- [W] Scribbles (Burlington)
- [R] Ink Ink (South Burlington)

Best bridal shop

- [W] True Bridal (Liam Junction)
- [R] Shalene's Bridal Boutique (Montpelier)

Best wedding venue

- [W] Inn at Killington Farms
- [R] Stowe Mountain Lodge

BETH EBY
AND
MARYLOU
ROBINSON

SERVICES & STUFF



Best Manicure/Pedicure **TOOTSIES**

Burlington

HAPPY FEET

With such frisky weather, the veritas of practical footwear such as Crocs, dogs and Birkenstocks in Vermont is no surprise. But the proprietors of Tootsies know it's what's inside that counts. Underneath the sensible shoes and boots, ladies in the know like indulged little digits that have been pampered with pedicures that smooth, massage, polish, scrub and wax them all along. The sole store, co-owned by Beth Eby and Mary Lou Robinson since 2006, even offers pedicure parties for girls right out, at which clients can sip juice or BYO alcohol. Whether while luxuriating in a pineapple pedi, along with nail services, Tootsies offers up friendly accessories ranging from parasols to jewelry to "fantastic footwear that will not break your budget."

CAROLYN FOX



PHOTO: MATTHEW THOMSEN

Best Website Developer **UNION STREET MEDIA**

Burlington

Everybody's on the Internet these days. If you need a new website, or even an upgrade, Seven Days readers recommend you call Union Street Media. Founder Ted Adler started the company in 1999. His first office space was his dorm room at Middlebury College. Today IBM speculate in creating websites for high-end real estate agents. It also builds e-commerce sites and provides Internet marketing services to businesses, schools and nonprofits. Last November, the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce recognized Adler and his innovative crew with its 2008 "Entrepreneurial Spirit Award."

CATHY RESNER

SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

First-pick florist

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
[W] Maplewood Florist (Burlington)
[DU] Story Car (Burlington)

OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY
[W] The Pink Shutter (Montpelier)

Best outdoor outfitter
[W] The Outdoor Gear Exchange (Burlington)
[DU] Eastern Mountain Sports (South Burlington)

Best bike shop

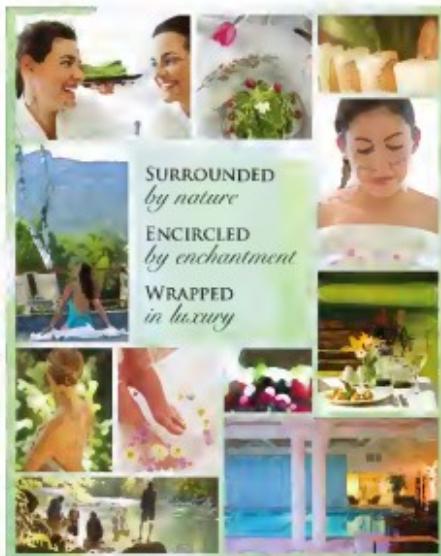
[W] Skidark (Burlington)
[DU] Old Spoker House (Burlington)

Best auto dealer

[W] The Automator of Shelburne
[DU] Burlington Subaru

Best real estate agency

[W] Colver Barker Rick & Bonheur Realty
[DU] Long & McLaughlin Sports Real Estate



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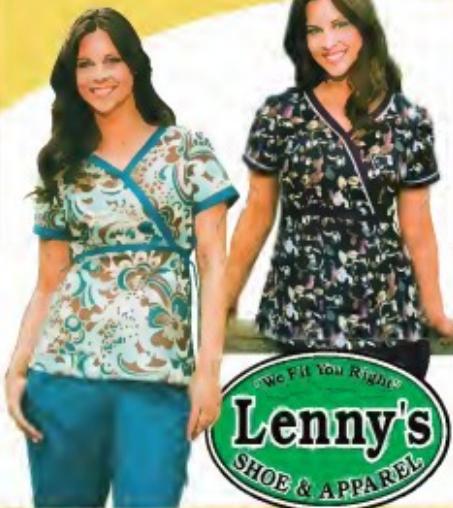
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SEVEN DAYSIES

2009 GUIDE TO READERS' PICKS

Greatest garden center

- [W] Birchen's Supply Company (Burlington, Williston)
[R]Dousou (Colchester)

Best VT green business

- [W] Seventh Generation (Burlington)
[R]MHS (Hinesburg)

Best place to do your banking

- [W] Merchants Bank
[R]New England Federal Credit Union

Best place to buy a pipe

- [W] Full Throttle (Burlington)
[R]The Boxx Gallery (Burlington)

Best adult toy store

- [W] Good Stuff (Burlington, St. Albans, White River Center)
[R]Image (Colchester)

Best hair salon

- [W] Indigo (Burlington)
[R]Stephen & Pearce Salon, Spa and Boutique (Burlington)

Best place to get body art

- [W] Reckless Tattoo (Burlington)
[R]Gold for Blood Tattoo (Burlington)

Best yoga studio

- [W] Evolution Physical Therapy & Yoga (Burlington)
[R]Yoga Nomad (Burlington)

Best health club

- [W] Agnes & Petrus Edge (South Burlington, Essex, Winooski)
[R]Shelburne Health & Fitness

Most spectacular spa

- [W] Topnotch Resort & Spa (Stowe)
[R]Snowshoe Mountain Resort & Spa (Snowshoe)

Best manicure/pedicure

- [W] Tootsie (Burlington)
[R]Spa at Stone Mountain Lodge



Best Place to Buy Women's Casual/Sportswear (Inside Chittenden County); Best Outdoor Outfitter

THE OUTDOOR GEAR EXCHANGE

Burlington

TAKE A HIKE

If you're easily overwhelmed when faced with bins of hiking socks and miles of waterproof jackets, the Outdoor Gear Exchange is not a safe place for you. Burlington's reigning outdoor retailer has everything you could ever want or need to outfit a trip to Mt. Mansfield or to Mt. Everest, and its customers have liked both. But you needn't be an Edward Hillary to find something of interest in OGE. In fact, you don't have to be a hiker at all. The shop sells plenty of samples and factory excesses of everything from puff coats to stylish tees, dog leashes to backcountry skin. Plus, with a sizeable consignment section, you don't have to go broke getting up. Bonus: Lots of friendly poohches walking around the store and a staff that's as good-looking and friendly as it is rugged.

LAUREN OBER

Grooviest Gift Shop (Inside Chittenden County) CANDLES & CREATIONS

South Burlington

CANDLE IN THE WIND

Quay Webster and Heather Price started their gift shop in 2007 knowing that opening a brick-and-mortar business can be risky. But their risk paid off, and today they're a go-to spot for candles of all varieties, as well as silver jewelry and products to help you balance your chakras. Electrify! Yes. New age? You bet. But these women complement each other well. Need a candle to make your therapist's balloon less anxious? Take your pick of palm-wax sticks scented with anything from Mulberry cobbler to coconut tea. How about books on crystal therapy and the power of positive thinking? Check. A warm, fuzzy feeling is included with every purchase — 35 percent of the store's proceeds go to area charities.

LAUREN OBER



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